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3 DESIGNATION OF ONE PERSON TO BE "IN CHARGE"  
OF EXTENSION WORK IN A COUNTY

Summarized by  
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Should a State designate a person to be in charge of extension work in a county? This is a question confronting some of the State extension directors and they want to know what the other States have done. A questionnaire on this subject was prepared by the Federal Extension Service and mailed to all State extension directors on July 25, 1955. Replies were received from all 48 States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. This is a summary of their replies.

1. WHERE THERE IS MORE THAN ONE AGENT IN THE COUNTY, IS IT THE POLICY OF THE STATE EXTENSION SERVICE TO HAVE ONE PERSON DESIGNATED TO BE IN CHARGE?

	Number	Percent
Yes . . . . .	35	68.6
No . . . . .	16	31.4
	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Comments by States having a policy.

The need of an individual to be in charge in a county was expressed by some of the States as follows:

"We regard it as inexcusably inefficient for the administration to expect State leaders to iron out all of the many administrative details involved in coordination of these increasing numbers within the county."

"The approach described here is recent; formerly the Home Economics and Agricultural programs were rather distinct. Coordination of the two is being accomplished gradually, as personnel become acquainted with our objectives."

"The designation of a person as administrator of the county staff is deemed most necessary. The increasing numbers in county staffs make such a designation increasingly necessary."

"As the size of the county extension staff grows, it becomes more necessary that one person assume leadership in administrative and supervisory capacities. The county agent is the logical person to do this. In general, the county agent's tenure is considerably greater than the other extension staff members. For this reason we do not find it necessary to name the agent County Director; yet it is understood that as chairman of the group he must assume most of the duties that would be



his were he named a County Director. We do not anticipate changing our present plan, other than to strengthen the training of the county agents for administrative work and to have the general understanding throughout our whole staff that such a system is the only practical way to get coordination, cooperation, and efficiency."

". . . it will become more and more essential that we have a person with administrative skill as well as skill in technical subject matter, as the County Extension Chairman."

"According to our policy, the person designated in charge might be either the County Extension Agent or Home Extension Agent. However, as yet we have not had occasion to place this responsibility with the Home Extension Agent."

"The chairman of the county staff is usually the county agricultural agent but could be the home agent."

"I hold the County Agent responsible to me as representing the Extension Service in fiscal matters, etc. This does not mean the Home Demonstration Agent is responsible to the County Agent in matters strictly homemaking - but administratively the County Agent is the head through which problems are channeled to the State office."

"This responsibility has only recently been assigned. The State law designates the county "Agricultural Extension Agent" as the person to approve claims for all expenditures of county funds. So this attached some legal responsibilities to that agent."

"Under present University regulations there can be only one county agent per county. All others are assistant agents."

Several of the States indicated that they "look upon agents in the county operating as a team and discussing responsibilities with one another." These States felt, however, that "It is desirable to have one agent take the initiative in providing opportunities for joint consideration of matters of concern to all agents." In these States, the agent who is to be in charge is designated but does not exercise supervision of other agents or their phases of the county extension program.

#### Comments by States having no policy.

Of the 16 States reporting that they had no policy, two indicated that because of increased numbers of personnel in the counties they were going to move towards putting a person in charge. Another State commented that the administrative officials of the University had not authorized the designation, but there was a need for such a person.

Four other States stressed that the best type of county administration provided for a committee approach with all agents serving on the committee, and each feeling an equal responsibility for extension work in the county. They felt that this committee should meet weekly with either the County Agricultural Agent as chairman, or with the chairmanship rotated among the agents. It was also their feeling that all should cooperate if the strongest extension program is to be developed and carried on in the county.

Other States made the following comments.

"We appoint a 'Senior Agent' (usually the agent with the longest tenure in the county) as the contact person for the Director's office. This person has no administrative duties in connection with the 'Senior Agent' appointment and receives no extra salary. He or she may gather or distribute information for the Director of Extension - from or to other agents, etc."

"I assume this relates to one person to be in charge of the entire extension program in the county. We look to the County Agent to head up the agricultural work and the Home Agent the home economics work. These agents work closely together and with the district agents, in matters relating to local financing, salaries, and expansion and improving the work."

"The white County Agent is in charge of his assistants and work in his field. The white Home Demonstration Agent is in charge of her assistants and work in her field. The Negro County Agent is in charge of his assistants and work in his field. The Negro Home Demonstration Agent is in charge of her assistants and work in her field."

For obvious reasons the information presented in the remainder of this report pertains to the 35 States that follow the practice of having someone in charge in the counties.

2. IN HOW MANY COUNTIES HAS A PERSON BEEN SELECTED TO BE IN CHARGE?

The 35 States indicated that in 1,665 of their 1,758 counties, or 95 percent, a person has been selected to be in charge. This is approximately one-half of the total number of counties in the United States having extension agents. These 35 States averaged 50 counties each with 3.0 agents per county, while the 16 States without such a policy had 86 counties each with 3.7 agents per county.

3. WHO SELECTS THIS PERSON?

In 27 States it is the State extension director who selects the individual to be in charge in a county. However, eight of these States indicated that the selection was made with the help of the supervisory team, the State administrative staff, or advisory committee, jointly with the county governing board, or with the approval of the University trustees. In four States the county is brought into the picture, and in five States the appointment is automatic under the general policy of the State Extension Service or by State law. The following tabulation gives this information in more detail:

Person selected by:

State extension director . . . . .	20	States
State extension director and State administrative staff or State advisory board . . . . .	2	"
State extension director on recommendation of district supervisors (agricultural and home economics) . . . . .	2	"
State extension director and county governing board (jointly) . . . . .	2	"
State extension director on recommendation of district supervisors and in cooperation with county governing board . . . . .	1	"
State extension director with approval of University trustees . . . . .	1	"
District agricultural and home agent together. . . . .	1	"
Cooperating county agency . . . . .	1	"
Automatic under general policy of State Law . . . . .	5	"

4. ON WHAT BASIS IS THE SELECTION MADE?

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
By the position held . . . . .	25	71.4
Qualifications of individual . . . . .	10	28.6
	<u>35</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Two of the 25 States reporting selection on the basis of "position held" qualified their answer by indicating that this was usually the case but not necessarily so in every instance. Similarly, three of the States reporting selection on the basis of an individual's qualifications indicated that seniority was also a factor taken into consideration.

In those 25 States where "position held" is the basis for selecting the person to be in charge in a county, that position is designated by the following titles:

County Agricultural Agent . . . . .	11	States
County Extension Agent . . . . .	3	"
County Agent . . . . .	5	"
Agricultural Agent . . . . .	2	"
Agricultural Extension Agent . . . . .	1	"
County Administrator or County Agricultural Agent . . . . .	1	"
County Extension Service Director or County Agent-Manager . . . . .	1	"
County Extension Director . . . . .	1	"



Most of these titles are to positions held by men. One State expressed this thought - "He is generally accepted as such (to be in charge) by his co-workers because of his age, experience in extension work, longer service, prestige, and other recognized characteristics of leadership." Several States pointed out that according to their policy "the person in charge might be either the County Extension Agent or Home Extension Agent."

5. WHAT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY DUTIES ARE ASSIGNED TO THE PERSON SELECTED?

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Management of office space, equipment, supplies, etc. . . . .	32	91.4
Selection of county clerical staff . . . . .	30	85.7
Supervision of county clerical staff . . . . .	29	82.8
Responsibility for fiscal and budgetary matters . . . . .	29	82.8
Responsibility for county office records and reports . . . . .	28	80.0
Contacts with county governing board . . . . .	28	80.0
Contacts with county extension advisory committee . . . . .	28	80.0
Clears communications on administrative matters between State director's office and individual county workers . . . . .	26	74.3
Development of "overall" county extension program . . . . .	24	68.5
Execution of "overall" county extension program . . . . .	19	54.3
Induction training of county extension agents . . . . .	18	45.7
Supervision of all agents . . . . .	16	45.7
Calling of staff conferences . . . . .	4	11.5
Selection of county extension agents . . . . .	3	8.6
Maintaining good working relationships and cooperation among workers in county office . . . . .	3	8.6
Building and maintaining good public relations . . . . .	3	8.6
Organizing and effective function of county extension advisory committees . . . . .	2	5.7
Initiating salary recommendations for academic members of staff . . . . .	1	2.8

In a few instances some of these duties are performed in cooperation with other agents or are performed to a limited degree. In two States the laws under which extension operates stipulate that certain responsibilities are legally shared by the State extension director and agricultural agent.

6. ARE THESE RESPONSIBILITIES REFLECTED IN THE PERSON'S TITLE?

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes . . . . .	9	25.7
No . . . . .	26	74.3
	<u>35</u>	<u>100.0</u>

While only one-fourth of the States indicated that the title given to the person in charge in a county reflected the added responsibilities of the position, there were no two States that used the same title. These nine States were evenly divided as to the use of the title in contacts with the public.

<u>Title given person in charge</u>	<u>Used in contact with public</u>
County Administrator	No
County Extension Service Director or County Agent-Manager	Yes
Office Manager	No
County Extension Director	Yes
County Extension Chairman	No (Advisory group and other lay groups are aware of this title)
Chairman, County Extension Office	No
Farm Advisor (County Director of Agricultural Extension)	Yes
County Extension Agent, Chairman	Not answered
County Agent (Other agents have title such as Home Demonstration Agent or 4-H Club Agent)	Yes

Two other States indicated in their comments that they use the terms "Fiscal Agent" and "Senior Agent" in their conversations within the extension family but said these terms are not actual titles.

7. HAS THERE BEEN ANY SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROVIDED TO ACQUAINT THIS PERSON WITH HIS ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS?

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes . . . . .	25	71.4
No . . . . .	8	22.9
No answer . . . . .	2	5.7
	<u>35</u>	<u>100.0</u>

More than two-thirds of these States reported having given specialized training to the person in charge in a county. In nearly every instance more than one method of giving this training was mentioned. The training varied greatly. Some States indicated that their efforts in this field have been "limited," while others, which had reported doing quite a bit, felt that it had been "less than adequate in both scope and detail." For purposes of identification, this training might be put in the following groupings:

Induction training.

In which the individual is "informed of additional duties at time of assuming responsibilities."

Duties are outlined in County Extension Handbook.

Inservice training.

Individuals given help through supervisory visits and office conferences.

At district or annual State conferences in which part of the conference was devoted to this subject. One State mentioned that this training in office management and job administration is given annually to all agents.

Special workshops, summer schools, or conferences of up to three days' duration devoted wholly to administration policy and procedure, personnel and office management.

8. DOES THIS PERSON RECEIVE A HIGHER SALARY ON ACCOUNT OF THE ADDED DUTIES INVOLVED?

	Number	Percent
Yes . . . . .	19	54.3
No . . . . .	15	42.9
No answer . . . . .	1	2.8
	<u>35</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Slightly more than one-half of the 35 States reported paying a higher salary to the individual in charge in a county. In a few instances it was rather difficult to determine from the comments whether the higher salary is due to the position the individual holds title to, such as County Agricultural Agent, or to the added duties and responsibilities of being in charge in the county.







